

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PLANTING  
Wednesday, February 12, 2014, 5:30-7:00 pm  
147 Hampshire St., DPW Main Conference Room

MINUTES

PRESENT: City Arborist Dave Lefcourt, Community Development representative Taha Jennings; Kathleen Kelly, Michael Hanlon, Paula Cortes, David Davis, Janet Burns, Florrie Wescoat, Chantal Eide, Emily Axelrod, Carolyn Matthews, Nancy Phillips; prospective members Kathleen Caldara, Jonathan Lewis, Johan Paulsson, Angelynn Grant, Wayne Marshall.

Minutes taken by Nancy Phillips.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 by David Davis.

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

1. MINUTES from the January 2013 meeting were accepted.
2. ARBORIST UPDATES:
  - a. Committee Membership: 5 potential members attended the meeting. David Lefcourt and Owen O'Reardon will follow up with interviews.
  - b. Tree Planting: D. Lefcourt (DL) has finished updating the GIS list of trees planted. So far 273 trees have been planted this fiscal year, including those planted by Harvard at the Fogg Museum; the City requires at least 300; this target should be reached by the end of the fiscal year.  
M. Hanlon and P. Cortes questioned whether Harvard trees, not paid for by the City, should be part of the target 300, given that the City isn't paying for the Fogg trees. P. Cortes stated that the greater concern should be tree maintenance, not numbers planted.  
Other planting projects: Main Street/Broadway near Kendall Square; Longfellow Bridge median strip.
  - c. Pruning: DL is currently using a 6-year pruning cycle, which will become infeasible with the increasing number of City trees. Moreover, young trees need a first pruning after 3 years, not 6. In order to maintain a 6-year cycle, a budget increase may be necessary after FY15. The City will also try to add summer staff, e.g. students. DL noted that the pruning cycle may actually save money by reducing storm damage to trees.  
Current work: Cambridge Landscape has begun pruning street trees. Northern Tree is working at the golf course; their contract renews in March.
  - d. Arborist Budget: We discussed ways that CPP might support DL in advocating for a bigger budget. DL stated that budget request goes to City Council. Taha Jennings noted that previous budgets can be accessed on-line.
3. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT UPDATE:
  - a. New dog park is being planned.
  - b. Elm St. / Hampshire St. plaza: new landscaping (but not new trees) is being planned; at community meetings attendees have expressed safety concerns.
  - c. Curley St. park: hearing is to take place February 13.

- d. East Cambridge / Kendall Square: an open-space study is beginning regarding roughly 5 acres of new public open space (cf. [www.cambridgema.gov/kendallopenspace](http://www.cambridgema.gov/kendallopenspace) . The City plans to hold a design competition.
  - e. Taha Jennings is leaving Community Development and moving to the City Manager's office. CDD will, therefore, designate a new staff person to attend CPP meetings.
4. TREE HEARING: Next hearing will be late March regarding Whittemore Ave, where there is a high-pressure gas line with two trees planted over it. Federal DOT regulations do not allow anything above such gas lines that could potentially cause leakage. The City has been informed by Spectra Energy (inspecting on behalf of DOT) that the trees must be removed; the City would be compensated.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

- 1. COMPLETED ITEMS FROM JANUARY 2013 MEETING MINUTES:
  - a. DL will contact CHA to offer advice about treating ash trees on CHA properties after he determines what should be done for DPW trees.
  - b. DL will communicate with adjacent towns' forestry departments describing his ash tree rating matrix and program for dealing with emerald ash borer.  
(M.Hanlon asked whether it would be better to remove all but the oldest/largest ash trees instead of being locked into a possibly endless treatment program. DL responded that DPW had considered but rejected this. M.Hanlon also asked if treated trees are more susceptible to other pests; DL responded that this isn't known. D. Davis asked if soil drench would be less invasive than injection; DL said this is too difficult in urban situations.)
  - c. DL has asked DPW for funding for a 2<sup>nd</sup> Water by Bike position.
  - d. CPP letter to 93 Kirkland St. developer has been drafted, revised, and sent.
  - e. DL has contacted Cambridge Plant and Garden Club regarding payment for the Gore St. park linden.
- 2. CARRIED-OVER & NEW ACTION ITEMS:
  - a. DL will find out from Cambridge Plant & Garden Club what tree they want to buy as replacement for the lost library tree.
  - b. CPP should discuss whether we want to review Arborist's tree removal recommendations before these are presented at public hearings.
  - c. D. Davis asked for a copy of Harvard's tree planting specifications for the Fogg site.
  - d. P. Cortes asked if the City could arrange for a contractor to offer reduced rates for EAB treatment for private tree owners, or at least encourage private owners to form group(s) to contract for ash tree treatment.
- 3.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.